



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Honorable Salam Noor
Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction
Oregon Department of Education
255 Capitol Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

March 13, 2017

Dear Deputy Superintendent Noor:

Thank you for your participation in the U.S. Department of Education's (the Department) assessment peer review process under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) maintains the essential requirements from NCLB that each State annually administer high-quality assessments in at least reading/language arts, mathematics, and science that meet nationally recognized professional and technical standards. Therefore, as you know, the Department reinstituted peer review of State assessment systems so that each State receives feedback from external experts on the assessments it is currently administering. We appreciate the efforts required to prepare for the peer review, which occurred in June and August 2016. State assessment systems provide essential information that States, districts, principals, and teachers can use to identify the academic needs of students, target resources and supports toward students who need them most, evaluate school and program effectiveness, and close achievement gaps among students. A high-quality assessment system also provides useful information to parents about their children's advancement against and achievement of grade-level standards. The Department's peer review of State assessment systems is designed to provide feedback to States to support the development and administration of high-quality assessments.

On October 6, 2016, the Department sent a letter to chief State school officers outlining the outcomes for States related to the assessment peer review. I am writing to provide you feedback on your State's recent submission of evidence. External peer reviewers and Department staff evaluated the Oregon Department of Education's (ODE) submission and found, based on the evidence received, that the components of your assessment system met some, but not all of the statutory and regulatory requirements of section 1111(b)(1) and (3) of the ESEA, as amended by NCLB. Based on the recommendations from this peer review and our own analysis of the State's submission, I have determined the following:

- Reading/Language (R/LA) and mathematics general assessments in grades 3-8 (Smarter Balanced). **Substantially meets requirements.**
- R/LA and mathematics general assessments in high school (Smarter Balanced). **Substantially meets requirements.**
- R/LA and mathematics alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS) in grades 3-8 and high school (Oregon Extended Assessment (ORExt)). **Partially meets requirements.**
- Science AA-AAAS in grade bands 3-5, 6-8, and high school (ORExt). **Partially meets requirements.**

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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

The components that **substantially meet requirements** meet most of the requirements of the statute and regulations but some additional information is required. The Department expects that Oregon should be able to provide this additional information within one year.

The components that **partially meet requirements** do not meet a number of the requirements of the statute and regulations and ODE will need to provide substantial additional information to demonstrate it meets the requirements. The Department expects that ODE may not be able to submit all of the required information within one year.

The specific list of items required for ODE to submit is enclosed with this letter. Because some of the State's components have partially met the requirements, the Department is placing a condition on the State's Title I grant award related to those components of the assessment system. To satisfy this condition, ODE must submit satisfactory evidence to address the items identified in the enclosed list. ODE must submit a plan and timeline within 30 days outlining when it will submit all required additional documentation for peer review. The Department will also host regular (e.g., quarterly) progress calls with the State to discuss the State's progress on its timeline. If, following the peer review of the additional evidence, adequate progress is not made, the Department may take additional action. Additionally, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) will monitor progress on matters pertaining to requirements in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) related to the participation of students with disabilities in Title I assessments. Insufficient progress to address such matters may lead OSERS to place a condition on ODE's IDEA Part B grant award.

The Department notes that ODE submitted a waiver request for assessing speaking that was approved on August 5, 2016, for the 2016–2017, 2017–2018, and 2018–2019 school years.

In addition, the full peer review notes from the review are enclosed. These recommendations to the Department formed the basis of the Department's determination. Please note that the peers' recommendations may differ from the Department's feedback; we encourage you to read the full peer notes for additional suggestions and recommendations for improving your assessment system beyond what is noted in the Department's feedback. Department staff will reach out to your assessment director in the next few days to discuss the peer notes and the Department's determination and to answer any questions you have.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to improving educational outcomes for all students. I look forward to our continued partnership as we move ahead with this critical work. I appreciate the work you are doing to improve your schools and provide a high-quality education for your students. If you have any questions, please contact Shauna Myers or Carol Manitaras of my staff at: OSS.Oregon@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

Monique M. Chism Ph.D
Acting Assistant Secretary
Elementary and Secondary Education

Enclosures

cc: Dawne R. Huckaby, Assistant Superintendent for the Office of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Critical Elements Where Additional Evidence is Needed to Meet the Requirements for Oregon's Assessment System

Critical Element	Additional Evidence Needed
1.5 – Participation Data	<p>For the alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS) in reading/language arts (R/LA), mathematics, and science, ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation that provides the overall statewide participation in the State's AA-AAAS for each subject.
2.1 – Test Design and Development	<p>For the ORExt R/LA, mathematics, and science AA-AAAS for all grades, ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of the targeted distribution of item difficulty by content domain for each grade-subject test. <p>For the R/LA and mathematics general assessments in grades 3-8 and HS (Smarter Balanced), ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that the Smarter Balanced test design aligns the assessments to the full depth and breadth for all of the academic content standards in R/LA (including speaking) and mathematics at each grade level. [NOTE: Oregon has received a speaking waiver; therefore, the Department does not expect Oregon to submit additional evidence regarding speaking during the period of the waiver.] Evidence that the item selection procedures for the computer adaptive test (CAT) online assessment adequately deliver tests that meet test design requirements for the intended depth of knowledge (DOK) of the assessments (also applies to evidence requested for element 2.2). Evidence that, for cases where an assessment includes off-grade level content, assessments produce grade level student achievement scores that are based only on grade-level content items. Evidence that the item pools for all versions of the assessments (i.e., general, American Sign Language, Braille and Spanish) are sufficient to support the test design requirements.
2.2 – Item Development	<p>For the ORExt R/LA, mathematics, and science assessments for all grades, ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of the procedures used to select and train test item writers. <p>For R/LA and mathematics general assessments in grades 3-8 and HS (Smarter Balanced), ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See evidence regarding DOK and item pools in element 2.1 above.
2.3 – Test Administration	<p>For R/LA and mathematics general assessments in grades 3-8 and HS (Smarter Balanced), ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation of a comprehensive contingency plan to address possible technology challenges during test administration.
2.5 – Test Security	<p>For R/LA and mathematics general assessments in grades 3-8 and HS (Smarter Balanced), ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of procedures to document testing irregularities (e.g., application of a data forensics program).

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3.1 – Overall Validity, including Validity Based on Content	<p>For the ORExt R/LA, mathematics, and science assessments in all grades, ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation consisting of detail on the number of raters reviewing alignment for each content standard (to provide context for summary judgments). • Evidence of the results of an independent alignment study. <p>For R/LA and mathematics general assessments in grades 3-8 and HS (Smarter Balanced), ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence as noted for all item pools in element 2.1 above. • Evidence that Smarter Balanced assessments that include off-grade level content conform to the on-grade level blueprint for the assessment. • Evidence of alignment of sample test forms for grades 3, 4, 6, and 7 in R/LA and mathematics. • Evidence of plans to improve alignment of the tests.
3.2 – Validity Based on Cognitive Processes	<p>For the ORExt R/LA, mathematics, and science assessments in all grades, ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation to support the assertion that ORExt includes items at different levels of cognitive complexity (e.g., cognitive labs, synthesis of feedback from external item review).
3.3 – Validity Based on Internal Structure	<p>For the ORExt R/LA, mathematics, and science assessments in all grades, ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that provides additional detail on calibration procedures and measurement model applied to document the internal structure of the test. • Evidence to support subdomain reporting such as correlations among subscores, disattenuated correlations among subscores, and examination of dimensionality. <p>For R/LA and mathematics general assessments in grades 3-8 and HS (Smarter Balanced), ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that documents the internal structure of the tests using operational data.
3.4 – Validity Based on Relationships with Other Variables	<p>For the ORExt R/LA, mathematics, and science assessments in all grades, ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that the State assessment scores are related to other variables (other than extended assessment scores), and • Evidence that clarifies the meaning of the correlations reported for each grade level within the Technical Report. <p>For R/LA and mathematics general assessments in grades 3-8 and HS (Smarter Balanced), ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that better supports the relationship of Smarter Balanced assessments to other variables, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reports of analyses that demonstrate convergent relationships between State assessment results and measures other than test scores, such as performance criteria, including college- and career-readiness (e.g., college-enrollment rates; success in related entry-level, college

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	<p>credit-bearing courses; post-secondary employment in jobs that pay living wages); OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reports of analyses that demonstrate positive correlations between State assessment results and other variables, such as academic characteristic of test takers (e.g., average weekly hours spent on homework, number of advanced courses taken); OR ○ Reports of analyses that show stronger positive relationships with measures of the same construct than with measures of different constructs; OR ○ Reports of analyses that show assessment scores at tested grades are positively correlated with teacher judgments of student readiness at entry in the next grade level.
4.1 – Reliability	<p>For the ORExt R/LA, mathematics, and science assessments in all grades, ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of reliability, specifically overall standard errors of measurement, as well as classification consistency and classification accuracy measures.
4.2 – Fairness and Accessibility	<p>For the ORExt R/LA, mathematics, and science assessments in all grades, ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation including additional evidence of examination of differential item functioning by student groups. <p>For R/LA and mathematics general assessments in grades 3-8 and HS (Smarter Balanced), ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of estimated reliability for students receiving accommodations using operational data.
4.3 – Full Performance Continuum	<p>For the ORExt R/LA, mathematics, and science assessments in all grades, ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that the tests provide an adequately precise estimate of student performance across the full performance continuum, e.g., conditional standard error of measurement (CSEM) curves and related information. <p>For R/LA and mathematics general assessments in grades 3-8 and HS (Smarter Balanced), ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See evidence regarding DOK and item pools in element 2.1 above.
4.4 – Scoring	<p>For the ORExt R/LA, mathematics, and science assessments in grades 3-8 and HS, ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of procedures related to scoring training to reduce rater bias and procedures for quality assurance of scoring (e.g., second scoring, score-behinds, other quality control measures to ensure accurate/appropriate score decisions). <p>For R/LA and mathematics general assessments in grades 3-8 and HS (Smarter Balanced), ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that Smarter Balanced has clear, unambiguous criteria, including minimum thresholds, to ensure and document inter-rater reliability for States that are conducting hand-scoring of Smarter

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	<p>Balanced performance items.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of procedures related to scoring training to reduce rater bias and procedures for quality assurance of scoring (e.g., second scoring, score-behinds, other quality control measures to ensure accurate/appropriate score decisions).
4.5 – Multiple Assessment Forms	<p>For the ORExt R/LA, mathematics, and science assessments in all grades, ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence regarding year-to-year equating procedures and results (for years subsequent to 2014–2015). This evidence should provide detailed technical information on the method used to establish linkages and on the accuracy of equating functions.
4.6 – Multiple Versions of an Assessment	<p>For the ORExt R/LA, mathematics, and science assessments in all grades, ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation including descriptive statistics on students taking the various forms. Additional justification for the absence of empirical evidence to address the comparability of the meaning and interpretations of the assessment results. Additional documentation of the item development procedures for converting items to Braille format (including the criteria that determined when and why to eliminate a given item). Additional detail about the design and development process for alternate versions. <p>For R/LA and mathematics general assessments in grades 3-8 and HS (Smarter Balanced), ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of the design and development of the item pools used to support multiple versions of the assessments, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> computer-adaptive in ASL (R/LA listening only, Math) computer-adaptive in Braille (R/LA, math), computer-based fixed form in Braille (math), paper in Braille (R/LA, Math) computer-adaptive in Spanish (math), and paper in Spanish (math). Evidence that item pools for these additional computer adaptive versions can support the adaptive test design.
4.7 – Technical Analysis and Ongoing Maintenance	<p>For the ORExt R/LA, mathematics, and science assessments in all grades, ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that ODE has a system for monitoring and maintaining, and improving as needed, the quality of its alternate assessment system.
5.1 – Procedures for Including Students with Disabilities	<p>For the ORExt R/LA, mathematics, and science assessments in all grades, ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of notification to parents that students participating in ORExt do not receive a regular high school diploma.

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5.2 – Procedures for including ELs	<p>For the ORExt R/LA, mathematics, and science assessments in grades 3-8 and HS, ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation concerning the means by which the procedures to ensure inclusion of English Learners (ELs) is communicated to parents, including any evidence that communication about participation in ORExt is available in languages other than English. <p>For R/LA and mathematics general assessments in grades 3-8 and HS (Smarter Balanced), ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of guidance regarding selection of the Spanish version of the Smarter Balanced assessments for English learners, and evidence of procedures for communication of this guidance to districts, schools, teachers, and parents.
5.3 – Accommodations	<p>For R/LA and mathematics general assessments in grades 3-8 and HS (Smarter Balanced), ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmation that no accommodation tool in the Assessment Consortium Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines (UAAG) is excluded.
5.4 – Monitoring Test Administration for Special Populations	<p>For all ODE general and alternate assessments in grades 3-8 and HS, ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence to ensure that monitoring includes determining that students with disabilities, students served under Section 504 plans and English Learners receive accommodations that are consistent with accommodations provided to the students during instruction and/or practice.
6.2 – Achievement Standards-Setting	<p>For the ORExt R/LA, mathematics, and science assessments in grades 3-8 and HS, ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of the technical soundness of the achievement standards-setting process (e.g., complete appendices from the Auditors Comprehensive Report, or minutes of discussion from a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting regarding standard setting results).
6.3 – Challenging and Aligned Academic Achievement Standards	<p>For the ORExt R/LA, mathematics, and science assessments in all grades, ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of professional judgement that the AA-AAS represent the highest achievement standards possible for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
6.4 – Reporting	<p>For all ODE general and alternate assessments in grades 3-8 and HS, ODE must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of the availability of, or capacity to produce, Braille reports or those in languages other than Spanish, upon request. Evidence that the State follows a process and timeline for delivering individual student reports to parents, teachers, and principals as soon as practicable after each test administration.